



## U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

### 2006 Trafficking in Persons Report

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#### ARGENTINA (TIER 2 WATCH LIST)

Argentina is primarily a destination country for women and children trafficked for the purposes of sexual and labor exploitation. Most victims are trafficked internally, from rural to urban areas, for exploitation in prostitution. Argentine women and girls are trafficked to neighboring countries for sexual exploitation. Foreign women and children are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation, primarily from Paraguay, but also from Bolivia, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, and Chile; and Bolivians are trafficked for forced labor. The Government of Argentina does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. Argentina is placed on Tier 2 Watch List for its failure to show evidence of increasing efforts to combat trafficking over the previous year, particularly in the key area of prosecutions. Government efforts to improve interagency anti-trafficking coordination did not achieve significant progress in moving cases against traffickers through the judicial system. However, the government made progress in other areas, by submitting anti-trafficking legislation to Congress in August 2005 and sensitizing provincial and municipal government officials to the trafficking problem. Looking to the coming year, the government should work with Congress to achieve passage of anti-trafficking legislation; increase efforts to prosecute traffickers; expand training for court and law enforcement officials; and work with NGOs to heighten public awareness of the problem.

##### *Prosecution*

The government made limited progress in its actions against traffickers during the reporting period. Argentina lacks anti-trafficking statutes; law enforcement used other laws that prescribe penalties of up to 20 years in prison against traffickers. In the absence of anti-trafficking laws, officials were unable to provide accurate information regarding the extent of government actions against traffickers. The data available indicate that authorities launched at least 10 investigations relating to trafficking for sexual and labor exploitation, and arrested more than 33 suspects, including two provincial officials. However, there were no reports of investigations leading to convictions during the reporting period. A special prosecutor's unit for crimes against sexual integrity, child prostitution, and trafficking in persons was created in June 2005; the unit had begun receiving cases, but was not yet fully operational by March 2006.

##### *Protection*

The government made modest efforts to assist victims during the reporting period. The Attorney General's Office and provincial Victims Assistance Offices coordinated victim assistance policy through the Federal Council of Victims Assistance Offices and offered a variety of services including medical and psychological treatment, legal counseling, referrals to other sources of assistance, and repatriation. The government did not operate victim shelter and health care facilities dedicated for trafficking, but Victims Assistance Offices worked with social services agencies to ensure that trafficking victims received safe shelter and appropriate care. The government encouraged victims to support prosecutions and worked with source countries directly or referred repatriation requests to IOM. IOM repatriated approximately 40 foreign victims from six countries in the region. Identified trafficking victims were not detained, jailed, or forcibly deported, but more officials require training regarding how to identify and work with victims.

##### *Prevention*

The government made notable advances in prevention activities during the reporting period. Comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation was submitted to Congress in August 2005. The legislation defines trafficking according to the standards of the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress

and Punish Trafficking Persons, Especially Women and Children, and addresses protection and prevention programs. Government agencies trained provincial and municipal officials and launched a national awareness campaign on radio and television regarding violence against women and trafficking in persons.